



UNITED STATES SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON

AGING

RANKING MEMBER KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND

November 5th, 2025

Ranking Member Kirsten Gillibrand's Opening Statement “Renewing Our Commitment: How the Older Americans Act Uplifts Families Living with Aging-Related Diseases”

Chairman Scott, thank you for calling today's hearing, and thank you to our witnesses for being here.

I am greatly looking forward to our discussion on how our Older Americans Act provides vital life sustaining supports to older adults and people with disabilities that allow them to live with dignity and independence in the community of their choice.

Many Americans don't realize that the OAA even exists, even though an estimated one in six older adults and millions nationwide are helped by OAA funding and programs that it runs each year. In 2024 alone, the OAA allowed older Americans to receive over 240 million meals at home or in a community setting, over 14 million trips to a doctor, the supermarket, or community events and over 10 million hours of help with everyday tasks like dressing or bathing.

The OAA is a bipartisan workforce program that flies below the radar. It helps fill the gaps and serves as connective tissue that improves the efficiency of federal programs like Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, SNAP, and LIHEAP. Older adults and people with disabilities want to live and thrive in their communities, and the essential supports administered under the OAA allow them to do just that.

It's just a bonus that it's also cost efficient. Providing services to the community saves taxpayers billions of dollars every single year that would otherwise pay for extended stays in the hospital or institutional care, like nursing homes, which are far, far, more expensive. In 2024, OAA funding generated 3.39x the return on that investment. This means that every dollar invested in OAA aging services generated \$3.39 in community value and taxpayer savings. Furthermore, because of the efficient service delivery, older adults avoided 1.9 million days of long-term hospital stays and institutional care. But now is not the time to take our foot off the gas.

Authorization of the Older Americans Act expired last year. Even though so far there have been limited interruptions in OAA service delivery because of this lapse, it is vital to pass a reauthorization this fall to modernize the statute and be reflective of the evolving needs of older adults.

In June, I was proud to join Chairman Scott and our colleagues in introducing a bipartisan Older Americans Act Reauthorization of 2025. This bill reflects our bipartisan, bicameral agreement that was included in last December's final appropriations package, which unfortunately ultimately fell apart.

Particularly as the aging population is growing at the fastest rate in our nation's history and more Americans are being diagnosed with aging

related diseases each day, it is crucial to reauthorize this legislation that allows for greater flexibility and increased capacity under the law to meet the need.

In today's hearing, our witnesses will highlight how the OAA helps families living with aging related diseases by providing them with a variety of supportive and nutritional services, health promotion programs, and support for family caregivers. However, OAA services are just one essential piece of this puzzle. It helps these families live well in their communities now.

Other bipartisan landmark laws, like the National Plan to End Parkinson's Disease and the National Alzheimer's Project Act, which are currently being implemented by HHS, help to chart the path for the future. They represent a federal commitment to changing the trajectory of neurodegenerative diseases that impact millions of American lives.

As we continue this work, it is my top priority to ensure that the voices and needs of older adults and people with disabilities are elevated in federal policy discussion, particularly about the implementation of key statutes that impact their lives today and for years to come.

I look forward to doing this in my role as ranking member of the Aging Committee and the Senate co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Parkinson's Caucus, and the soon to be formed Americans with Disabilities Caucus. I will always fight to make sure that older adults and people with disabilities can age with health, dignity, and independence in their homes, in their communities, and in the setting of their choice.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how we can strengthen and administer the OAA to do exactly that.